

Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan: Unit 2 Review

November 2002

The Division of Forestry (DOF) is starting a public planning process to determine how to manage State Forest lands in Unit 2 of the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF). Unit 2 encompasses about 160,000 acres along the Tanana River west of Old Minto, between Minto and Nenana (see map, next page). The plan will not affect management of federal, Native, or private lands. The Division of Forestry recently completed the revision of the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan, including a special provision explaining that the Division will conduct a more detailed review of Unit 2 before offering timber sales in the unit.

The Tanana Valley State Forest

The Tanana Valley State Forest was established in 1983. Alaska law states the purpose of state forests: "The primary purpose in the establishment of state forests is multiple use management that provides for the production, utilization, and replenishment of timber resources while perpetuating personal, commercial, and other beneficial uses of resources" (AS 41.17.200). Multiple uses that must be provided for include commercial timber harvest, harvest of forest products for personal use, habitat for and uses of fish and wildlife, recreation, tourism, mining, agriculture, and other uses (AS 38.05.112).



Why prepare a plan for Unit 2?

In 1997, the Division of Forestry proposed a timber sale in Unit 2 called Tanana River West #2. After reviewing public comments and concerns about the sale proposal, the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) directed the Division of Forestry to put the sale on hold. The Division of Forestry promised to do more detailed public planning for Unit 2 before proceeding with any timber sales in the unit.

The Division of Forestry recently finished an update of the overall management plan for the Tanana Valley State Forest. We are now ready to begin more specific planning for the State Forest lands in Unit 2. The planning effort will determine how Unit 2 should be managed, and will consider the many resources of the forest. Unit 2 of the Tanana Valley State Forest is rich in natural resources, and people have many different ideas of how these natural resources should be used. Although some uses may conflict with each other, some uses can occur on the same piece of land if the uses are carefully managed. Uses that have the potential to conflict with each other may need to be separated, perhaps by confining them to discrete areas, or by creating timing restrictions that prevent certain uses from occurring at the same time.

How will the plan be prepared?

An advisory planning team of stakeholders will work together to recommend to the Department of Natural Resources how the area should be managed. Recommendations will be made by consensus, so everyone at the table will have an equal voice. The stakeholder process will include people from the local communities. It will also include representatives of people who use the forest and its timber, fish and wildlife, and recreation resources; interest groups; and agency representatives from the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Game, and the Department of Environmental Conservation. If no consensus is reached, however, the different recommendations of the group will be presented to DNR for consideration.

When the Unit 2 planning process is finished, adopted changes to the TVSF Management Plan will be included in the plan through an amendment.

If you are interested in participating, or in receiving mailings about the planning process, send us the postcard included in this newsletter, or send an email to:

alisona@dnr.state.ak.us

What issues will be addressed?

Issues raised during the public comment period for the Tanana River West #2 timber sale in 1997, and in discussions with people during the initial scoping stage of the planning process during the spring and summer of 2002, included the following topics.

Access

- How should roads and trails be managed?
- What guidelines are needed for new access?

Riparian management

- What buffers are needed along rivers for fish habitat?

Timber management

- How will forest health and insect outbreak issues affect management of Unit 2?
- Should timber harvests be designed to mimic natural disturbance, like fire, and/or create firebreaks around communities?
- What harvest systems should be used?
- What size and shape should timber sales be?

Research opportunities

- Should research opportunities be encouraged?

Fish and wildlife habitat

- How can we avoid negative impacts on fish and wildlife habitat?
- Should some timber harvests be designed specifically to enhance moose habitat?

Subsistence uses

- What guidelines are needed to minimize impacts on subsistence activities like fishing, hunting, and gathering spruce roots, birch bark, and berries?
- How can planning processes better address Native concerns?

Minto Spirit Camp and Minto Rehabilitation Camp

- What guidelines are needed to minimize conflicts between the camps and other activities?
- What infrastructure or firewood needs could timber management provide?

Economics and community benefits

- Should value-added opportunities be emphasized?
- How can local communities benefit from timber management?
- Should firewood areas and houselog areas be provided near communities?

Tourism

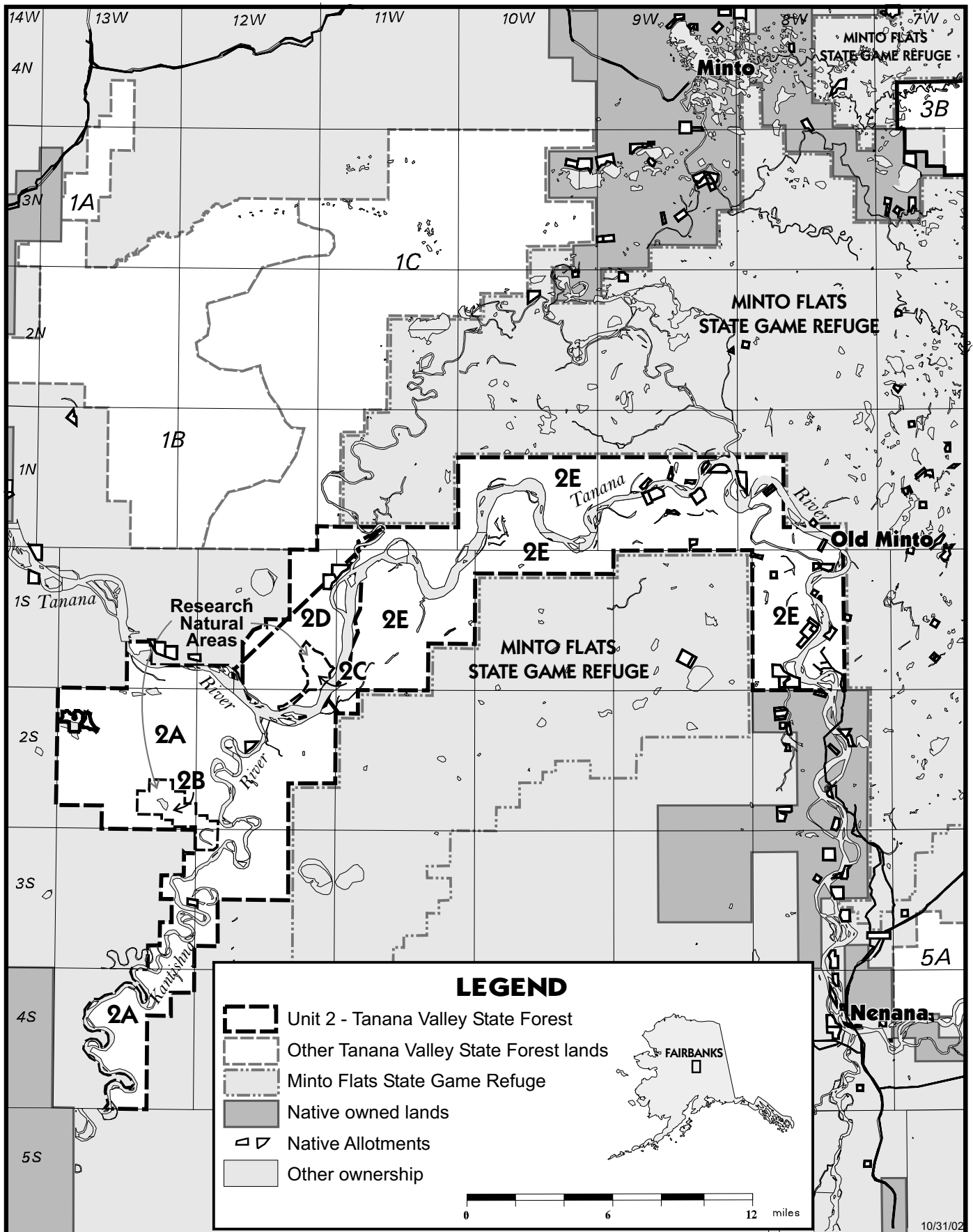
- What guidelines are needed to minimize potential conflicts between tourism and other activities?

Since 1997, some of these issues have been addressed through other processes.

- The Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan Update is complete (except for the Unit 2 section), and was prepared with lots of public participation. The final recommendations in the plan represent co-operation from and agreements among members of the public, agencies, and interest groups.
- Guidelines for timber harvesting buffers along rivers have been adopted by the Division of Forestry for Interior Alaska. The new standards are a result of two years of work by a broad array of interests, and are widely supported.
- A new Allowable Cut has been developed that is based on sustainable harvests, rather than the Annual Sale Quantity, which was based on potential revenue.
- Over the past six years, the Division of Forestry has emphasized value-added sales. In recent years, all DOF timber sales in Interior Alaska have been sold to local operators for local processing.

Other issues in Unit 2 will be addressed through this planning process.

Unit 2, Tanana Valley State Forest



How can you participate in the process?

Public involvement is one of the most important parts of the planning process. You are encouraged to be part of the planning process. If you are interested in participating, or in receiving mailings about the planning process, fill out and send us page 5 of this newsletter, or send an email with your name and mailing address to:

alisona@dnr.state.ak.us

or you may contact by mail:

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or by phone or fax:

phone: (907) 269-8450, fax: (907) 269-8902

For more information, you can also visit the Division of Forestry's web site for the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan.

<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/tvsfmp.htm>

What is the schedule for the planning process?

Summer 2002:	Initial scoping
Fall 2002:	Assemble planning team, begin meetings
Winter 2002-03:	Meetings with planning team
Winter-Spring 2003:	Conclude meetings
Spring 2003:	Amend Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan

Acknowledgments

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Victor Joseph, Director of Tanana Chiefs Conference substance abuse camp at Old Minto

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Doug Bowers of the historic Tolovana Roadhouse



Bill Cotter, distance sled dog racer, Nenana

Jason Mayrand, Nenana Mayor

Ron Silas and Ken Charlie, Minto Village Council Members

Sheryl Charlie, tribal administrator in Minto, and many elders in Minto

Jim Durst, Tom Paragi, Mike Doxey, Cathie Harms and Margo Matthews of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Members of the Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee

Members of the Bean Ridge Corporation Board

Kathy Keyes Sweet and the Nenana Village Council

John Carlson of Fairbanks

Frank Gurtler, Sabrina Gurtler, and Elizabeth Woods of Manley Hot Springs Village Council

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Name _____

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Email: _____

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Thank you for participating in the Tanana Valley State Forest planning process!

Division of Forestry
Alaska Department of Natural Resources

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WHAT'S INSIDE:

- ☐ Tanana Valley State Forest
- ☐ Preparing a plan for Unit 2
- ☐ Issues that will be addressed
- ☐ How you can participate
- ☐ Planning process schedule
- ☐ Acknowledgments

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